

*“There’s something happening here
What it is ain’t exactly clear”*

Join me now, if you have the time, as we take a stroll down memory lane to a time nearly four-and-a-half decades ago - a time when America last had uniformed ground troops fighting a sustained and bloody battle to impose, uhmm, 'democracy' on a sovereign nation.



Admiral Morrison

It is the first week of August, 1964, and U.S. warships under the command of U.S. Navy Admiral George Stephen Morrison have allegedly come under attack while patrolling Vietnam's Tonkin Gulf. This event, subsequently dubbed the 'Tonkin Gulf Incident,' will result in the immediate passing by the U.S. Congress of the obviously pre-drafted Tonkin Gulf Resolution, which will, in turn, quickly lead to America's deep immersion into the bloody Vietnam quagmire. Before it is over, well over fifty thousand American bodies - along with literally millions of Southeast Asian bodies - will litter the battlefields of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia.

For the record, the Tonkin Gulf Incident appears to differ somewhat from other alleged provocations that have driven this country to war. This was not, as we have seen so many times before, a 'false flag' operation (which is to say, an operation that involves Uncle Sam attacking himself and then pointing an accusatory finger at someone else). It was also not, as we have also seen on more than one occasion, an attack that was quite deliberately provoked. No, what the Tonkin Gulf incident actually was, as it turns out, is an 'attack' that never took place at all. The entire incident, as has been all but officially acknowledged, was spun from whole cloth. (It is quite possible, however, that the intent was to provoke a defensive response, which could then be cast as an unprovoked attack on U.S ships. The ships in question were on an intelligence mission and were operating in a decidedly provocative manner. It is quite possible that when Vietnamese forces failed to respond as anticipated, Uncle Sam decided to just pretend as though they had.)

Nevertheless, by early February 1965, the U.S. will - without a declaration of war and with no valid reason to wage one - begin indiscriminately bombing North Vietnam. By March of that same year, the infamous "Operation Rolling Thunder" will have commenced. Over the course of the next three-and-a-half years, millions of tons of bombs, missiles, rockets, incendiary devices and chemical warfare agents will be dumped on the people of Vietnam in what can only be described as one of the worst crimes against humanity ever perpetrated on this planet.

Also in March of 1965, the first uniformed U.S. soldier will officially set foot on Vietnamese soil (although Special Forces units masquerading as 'advisers' and 'trainers' had been there for at least four years, and likely much longer). By April 1965, fully 25,000 uniformed American kids, most still teenagers barely out of high school, will be slogging through the rice paddies of Vietnam. By the end of the year, U.S. troop strength will have surged to 200,000.



Lookout Mountain Ave and Laurel Canyon Blvd, google maps

Meanwhile, elsewhere in the world in those early months of 1965, a new 'scene' is just beginning to take shape in the city of Los Angeles. In a geographically and socially isolated community known as Laurel Canyon - a heavily wooded, rustic, serene, yet vaguely ominous slice of LA nestled in the hills that separate the Los Angeles basin from the San Fernando Valley - musicians, singers and songwriters suddenly begin to gather as though summoned there by some unseen Pied Piper. Within months, the 'hippie/flower child' movement will be given birth there, along with the new style of music that will provide the soundtrack for the tumultuous second half of the 1960s.



An uncanny number of rock music superstars will emerge from Laurel Canyon beginning in the mid-1960s and carrying through the decade of the 1970s. The first to drop an album will be The Byrds, whose biggest star will prove to be David Crosby. The band's debut effort, "Mr. Tambourine Man," will be released on the Summer Solstice of 1965. It will quickly be followed by releases from

- the John Phillips-led Mamas and the Papas (*If You Can Believe Your Eyes and Ears*, January 1966)
- Love with Arthur Lee (*Love*, May 1966)

- Frank Zappa and The Mothers of Invention (*Freak Out*, June 1966)
- Buffalo Springfield, featuring Stephen Stills and Neil Young (*Buffalo Springfield*, October 1966)
- The Doors (*The Doors* January 1967)

One of the earliest on the Laurel Canyon/Sunset Strip scene is Jim Morrison, the enigmatic lead singer of The Doors. Jim will quickly become one of the most iconic, controversial, critically acclaimed, and influential figures to take up residence in Laurel Canyon. Curiously enough though, the self-proclaimed "Lizard King" has another claim to fame as well, albeit one that none of his numerous chroniclers will feel is of much relevance to his career and possible untimely death: he is the son, as it turns out, of the aforementioned Admiral George Stephen Morrison.

And so it is that, even while the father is actively conspiring to fabricate an incident that will be used to massively accelerate an illegal war, the son is positioning himself to become an icon of the 'hippie'/anti-war crowd. Nothing unusual about that, I suppose. It is, you know, a small world and all that. And it is not as if Jim Morrison's story is in any way unique.



Frank Zappa: Pro-war, authoritarian, and what else?

During the early years of its heyday, Laurel Canyon's father figure is the rather eccentric personality known as Frank Zappa. Though he and his various Mothers of Invention line-ups will never attain the commercial success of the band headed by the admiral's son, Frank will be a hugely influential figure among his contemporaries. Ensconced in an abode dubbed the 'Log Cabin' - which sat right in the heart of Laurel Canyon, at the crossroads of Laurel Canyon Boulevard and Lookout Mountain Avenue - Zappa will play host to virtually every musician who passes through the canyon in the mid- to late-1960s. He will also discover and sign numerous acts to his various Laurel Canyon-based record labels. Many of these acts will be rather bizarre and somewhat obscure characters (think Captain Beefheart and Larry "Wild Man" Fischer), but some of them, such as psychedelic rocker cum shock-rocker Alice Cooper, will go on to superstardom.

Zappa, along with certain members of his sizable entourage (the 'Log Cabin' was run as an early commune, with numerous hangers-on occupying various rooms in the main house and the guest house, as well as in the peculiar caves and tunnels lacing the grounds of the home;



- Pamela Courson & Jim Morrison Jim Morrison, who for a time lived in a home on Rothdell Trail, behind the Laurel Canyon Country Store, may or may not have died in Paris on July 3, 1971. The events of that day remain shrouded in mystery and rumor, and the details of the story, such as they are, have changed over the years. What is known is that, on that very same day, Admiral George Stephen Morrison delivered the keynote speech at a decommissioning ceremony for the aircraft carrier USS Bon Homme Richard, from where, seven years earlier, he had helped choreograph the Tonkin Gulf Incident. A few years after Jim's death, his common-law wife, Pamela Courson, dropped dead as well, officially of a heroin overdose. Like Hendrix, Morrison had been an avid student of the occult, with a particular fondness for the work of Aleister Crowley. According to super-groupie Pamela DesBarres, he had also "read all he could about incest and sadism." Also like Hendrix, Morrison was just twenty-seven at the time of his (possible) death.
- Brandon DeWilde, a good friend of David Crosby and Gram Parsons, was killed in a freak accident in Colorado on July 6, 1972, when his van plowed under a flatbed truck. In the 1950s, DeWilde had been an in-demand child actor since the age of eight. He had appeared on screen with some of the biggest names in Hollywood, including Alan Ladd, Lee Marvin, Paul Newman, John Wayne, Kirk Douglas and Henry Fonda. Around 1965, DeWilde fell in with Hollywood's 'Young Turks,' through whom he met and befriended Crosby, Parsons, and various other members of the Laurel Canyon Club. DeWilde was just thirty at the time of his death.
- Christine Frka, a former governess for Moon Unit Zappa and the Zappa family's former housekeeper at the Log Cabin, died on November 5, 1972 of an alleged drug overdose, though friends suspected foul play. As "Miss Christine," Frka had been a member of the Zappa-created GTOs, a musical act, of sorts, composed entirely of very young groupies. She was also the inspiration for the song, "Christine's Tune: Devil in Disguise" by Gram Parson's Flying Burrito Brothers. Frka was probably in her early twenties when she died, possibly even younger.
- Danny Whitten, a guitarist/vocalist/songwriter with Neil Young's sometime band, Crazy Horse, died of an overdose on November 18, 1972. According to rock 'n' roll legend, Whitten had been fired by Young earlier that day during rehearsals in San Francisco. Young and Jack Nietzsche, Phil Spector's former top assistant, had given



The bridge of the USS Bon Homme Richard, January 1964. Just months later, the guy on the right would guide his ship into the Tonkin Gulf, and the young man on the left would begin a remarkable transformation into a brooding rock god. The Bon Homme Richard, by the way, was launched on April 29, 1944, under the sponsorship of Catherine McCain, the grandmother of a certain presidential contender.

Until around 1913, Laurel Canyon remained an undeveloped (and unincorporated) slice of LA - a pristine wilderness area rich in native flora and fauna. That all began to change when Charles Spencer Mann and his partners began buying up land along what would become Laurel Canyon Boulevard, as well as up Lookout Mountain. A narrow road leading up to the crest of Lookout Mountain was carved out, and upon that crest was constructed a lavish 70-room inn with sweeping views of the city below and the Pacific Ocean beyond. The Lookout Inn featured a large ballroom, riding stables, tennis courts and a golf course, among other amenities. But the inn, alas, would only stand for a decade; in 1923, it burned down, as tends to happen rather frequently in Laurel Canyon.



In 1913, Mann began operating what was billed as the nation's first trackless trolley, to ferry tourists and prospective buyers from Sunset Boulevard up to what would become the corner of Laurel Canyon Boulevard and Lookout Mountain Avenue. Around that same time, he built a massive tavern/roadhouse on that very same corner. Dubbed the Laurel Tavern, the structure boasted a 2,000+ square-foot formal dining room, guest rooms, and a bowling alley on the basement level. The Laurel Tavern, of course, would later be acquired by Tom Mix, after which it would be affectionately known as the Log Cabin.

Shortly after the Log Cabin was built, a department store mogul (or a wealthy furniture manufacturer; there is more than one version of the story, or perhaps the man owned more than one business) built an imposing, castle-like mansion across the road, at the corner of Laurel Canyon Boulevard and what would become Willow Glen Road. The home featured

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RIDERS ON THE STORM THE DOORS

“By that, I mean, ‘Get me a lead singer. He’s got sort of an androgynous blonde hair, very pretty. We need a guitar player, sort of hatchet-faced, wears a hat, plays very fast, very dramatic. He must be very dramatic. Get me a pound of bass player, pound of drummer’... they’re making little cardboard cutouts. They hire a producer, they hire writers... And in the current stuff now, they don’t even bother getting people to play. Don’t bother with that guitar player, bass player, drummer—nonsense... The people in those bands can’t write, play, or sing.” David Crosby, describing the synthetic, manufactured nature of today’s rock bands

AT THE VERY BEGINNING OF THIS JOURNEY, IT WAS NOTED THAT JIM Morrison’s story was not “in any way unique.” That, however, is not exactly true. It is certainly true that Morrison’s family background did not differ significantly from that of his musical peers, but in many other significant ways, Jim Morrison was indeed a most unique individual, and quite possibly the unlikeliest rock star to ever stumble across a stage.

Morrison essentially arrived on the scene as a fully developed rock star, complete with a backing band, a stage persona and an impressive collection of songs—enough, in fact, to fill the Doors’ first few albums.

How exactly he reinvented himself in such a radical manner remains something of a mystery, since before his sudden incarnation as singer/songwriter, James Douglas Morrison had never shown the slightest interest in music. None whatsoever. He certainly never studied music and could neither read nor write it. By his own account, he never had much of an interest in even listening to music. He told one interviewer that he “never went to concerts—one or two at most.” And before joining the Doors, he “never did any singing. I never even conceived of it.” Asked near the end of his life if he had ever had any desire to learn to play a musical instrument, Jim responded, “Not really.”

So here we had a guy who had never sang, who had “never even conceived” of the notion that he could open his mouth and make sounds come out, who couldn’t play an instrument and had no interest in learning such a skill, and who had never much listened to music or been anywhere near a band, even just to watch one perform, and yet he somehow emerged, virtually overnight, as a fully formed rock star who would quickly become an icon of his generation. Even more bizarrely, legend holds that he brought with him enough original songs to fill the first few Doors’ albums. Morrison did not, you see, do as other singer/songwriters do and pen the songs over the course of the band’s career; instead, he allegedly wrote them all at once, before the band was even formed. As Jim once acknowledged in an interview, he was “not a very prolific songwriter. Most of the songs I’ve written I wrote in the very beginning, about three years ago. I just had a period when I wrote a lot of songs.”

In fact, all of the good songs that Morrison is credited with writing were written during that period—the period during which, according to rock legend, Jim spent most of his time hanging out on the rooftop of a Venice apartment building consuming copious amounts of LSD. This was just before he hooked up with fellow student Ray Manzarek to form the Doors. Legend also holds, strangely enough, that that chance meeting occurred on the beach, though it seems far more likely that the pair would have actually met at UCLA, where both attended the university’s rather small and close-knit film school.

In any event, the question that naturally arises (though it does not appear to have ever been asked of him) is: How exactly did Jim “The Lizard King” Morrison write that impressive batch of songs? I’m certainly no musician myself, but it is my understanding that just about

every singer/songwriter across the land composes his or her songs in essentially the same manner: on an instrument—usually either a piano or a guitar. Some songwriters, I hear, can compose on paper, but that requires a skill set that Jim did not possess. The problem, of course, is that he also could not play a musical instrument of any kind. How then did he write the songs?

He would have had to have composed them, I'm guessing, in his head. So we are to believe then that a few dozen complete songs, never heard by anyone and never played by any musician, existed only in Jim Morrison's acid-addled brain. Anything is possible, I suppose, but even if we accept that premise, we are still left with some nagging questions, including the question of how those songs got *out of* Jim Morrison's head. As a general rule of thumb, if a songwriter doesn't know how to read and write music, he can play the song for someone who does and thereby create the sheet music (which was the case, for example, with all of the songs that Brian Wilson penned for the Beach Boys). But Jim quite obviously could not play his own songs. So did he, I don't know, maybe hum them?

And these are, it should be clarified, *songs* that we are talking about here, as opposed to just lyrics, which would more accurately be categorized as *poems*. Because Jim, as is fairly well known, was quite a prolific poet, whereas he was a songwriter only for one brief period of his life. But why was that? Why did Morrison, with no previous interest in music, suddenly and inexplicably become a prolific songwriter, only to just as suddenly lose interest after mentally penning an impressive catalog of what would be regarded as rock staples? And how and why did Jim achieve the accompanying physical transformation that changed him from a clean-cut, collegiate, and rather conservative-looking young man into the brooding sex symbol who would take the country by storm? And why, after a few years of adopting that persona, did Jim transform once again, in the last year or so of his life, into an overweight, heavily bearded, reclusive poet who seemed to have lost his interest in music just as suddenly and inexplicably as he had obtained it?

It wasn't just Morrison who was, in retrospect, a bit of an oddity; the entire band differed from other Laurel Canyon bands in a number of significant ways. As *Vanity Fair* once noted, "The Doors were always different." All four members of the group, for example, lacked previous band

experience. Morrison and Manzarek, as noted, were film students, and drummer John Densmore and guitarist Robby Kreiger were recruited by Manzarek from his Transcendental Meditation class—which is, I guess, where one goes to find musicians to fill out one’s band. That class, however, apparently lacked a bass player, so they did without—except for those times when they used session musicians and then claimed that they did without.

Anyway, the point is that none of the four members of the Doors had any real band credentials. Even a band as contrived as the Byrds, as we shall soon see, had members with band credentials. So too did Buffalo Springfield, with Neil Young and Bruce Palmer, for example, having played in the Mynah Birds, backing a young vocalist who would reinvent himself as Rick “Superfreak” James (Goldy McJohn of Steppenwolf, oddly enough, was a Mynah Bird as well). The Mamas and the Papas were put together from elements of the Journeymen and the Mugwumps. And so on with the rest of the Laurel Canyon bands.

The Doors could cite no such band lineage. They were just four guys who happened to come together to play the songs written by the singer who had never sung but who had a sudden calling and a magical gift for songwriting. And as you would expect with four guys who had never actually played in a band before, they didn’t really play very well. And that is kind of an understatement. Don’t take my word for it though; let’s let the band’s producer, Paul Rothchild, weigh in: “The Doors were not great live performers musically. They were exciting theatrically and kinetically, but as musicians they didn’t make it; there was too much inconsistency, there was too much bad music. Robby would be horrendously out of tune with Ray, John would be missing cues, there was bad mic usage too, where you couldn’t hear Jim at all.”

As fate would have it, I have heard some audio of a young and quite inebriated Jim Morrison at the microphone, and I would have to say that not being able to “hear Jim at all” might have, in many cases, actually improved the performance. But performing poorly as a live band, of course, did not really set the Doors apart from its contemporaries. Another thing that *was* unusual about the band, however, is that, from the moment the band was conceived, the lineup never changed. No one was added, no one was replaced, no one dropped out of the band over ‘artistic differences,’ or to pursue a solo career, or to join another band,

or for any of the other reasons that bands routinely change shape.

It would be difficult to identify another Laurel Canyon band of any longevity that could make the same claim. After their first two albums, the Byrds changed lineups with virtually every album release. Frank Zappa's Mothers of Invention were in a near-constant state of flux. Love and Steppenwolf changed lineups on a regular basis, with leaders John Kay and Arthur Lee routinely firing band members. Laurel Canyon's country-rock bands were also constantly changing shape, usually by incestuously swapping members amongst themselves.

But not the Doors. Jim Morrison's band arrived on the scene as a fully formed entity, with a name (taken from Aldous Huxley's *The Doors of Perception*), a stable lineup, a backlog of soon-to-be hit songs... and no previous experience writing, arranging, playing or performing music. Other than that though, they were just your run-of-the-mill, organic, grass roots, 1960s rock'n'roll band, albeit one with a curious aversion to political advocacy. Jim Morrison was, by virtually all accounts, a voracious reader. Former teachers and college professors expressed amazement at the breadth and depth of his knowledge on various topics, and at the staggering array of literary sources that he could accurately cite. And yet he was known to tell interviewers that he "[had]n't studied politics that much, really." But that was okay, according to drummer John Densmore, since "a lot of people at our concerts at least, they're sort of—it seems like they don't really come to hear us speak politics."

That's the way it was in the 1960s, you see; the young folks of that era just didn't concern themselves much with politics, and certainly didn't want their anti-war icons engaging in anything resembling political discourse.

During the Doors' glory days on the Sunset Strip, Morrison "struck up an intimate friendship" with Whisky-a-Go-Go owner Elmer Valentine, according to a *Vanity Fair* article published in September 2006. At the time, Valentine was also, coincidentally of course, very close to his own secretary/booking agent, Gail Sloatman, whom Jim had known since kindergarten through Naval officers' circles. Valentine was also—by pretty much all accounts, including his own—a 'made man.'

Valentine arrived in LA by way of Chicago, where he had worked as a vice cop—a decidedly corrupt vice cop. By his own account, he worked as a police captain's bagman, "collecting the filthy lucre on behalf of the

captain.” He also boasted that, even while working as a vice cop, his night job was “running nightclubs for the outfit—for gangsters.” One “very close friend” from his days in Chicago was “Felix Alderisio, also known as Milwaukee Phil, who was arguably the most feared hit man in the country in the 1950s and sixties, carrying out at least fourteen murders for Sam Giancana and other Chicago bosses.”

Valentine was ultimately indicted for extortion, though he naturally managed to avoid prosecution and conviction. Venturing out to LA circa 1960, he soon found himself running PJ’s nightclub at the corner of Crescent Heights and Santa Monica Boulevards (which, as you may recall, was co-owned by Eddie Nash and was the favored hangout of early rocker/murder victim Bobby Fuller). It wasn’t long though before Valentine had his very own club to run—the legendary Whisky-a-Go-Go, where numerous Laurel Canyon bands, including the Doors in the summer of 1966, served their residency.

Valentine obviously had considerable financial backing to launch his business empire and it wasn’t much of a secret on the Strip where that backing came from. Frank Zappa once cryptically referred to Valentine’s backers as an “ethnic organization,” while Chris Hillman of the Byrds simply noted that, “whoever financed Elmer, I don’t want to know.”

Valentine received far more than just financial backing to launch the Whisky; he got a generous assist from the media as well. As *Vanity Fair* noted, “Within months of the Whisky’s debut, *Life* magazine had written it up, Jack Paar had broadcast an episode of his post-*Tonight* weekly program from the club, and Steve McQueen and Jayne Mansfield had installed themselves as regulars.” Legendary actor McQueen, it should be noted, was a former US Marine who had served in an elite unit tasked with protecting President Harry Truman’s private yacht.

Turning now to the Byrds, the band that started the folk-rock revolution, we find that they were, by any reasonable assessment, an entirely manufactured phenomenon. As a fledgling band, they had any number of problems. The first and most obvious was that the band’s members did not own any musical instruments. That problem was solved though when Naomi Hirschorn, better known for funding quasi-governmental projects such as the Hirschorn Museum in Washington, DC, stepped up to the plate to provide the band with instruments, amplifiers and the like. But that didn’t solve a bigger problem, which was that the band’s

members, with the notable exception of Jim (later Roger) McGuinn, didn't have a clue as to how to actually play those instruments.

Cast to play the bass player was Chris Hillman, who had never picked up a bass guitar in his life. As he candidly admitted years later, he "was a mandolin player and didn't know how to play bass. But [the other band members] didn't know how to play their instruments either, so I didn't feel too bad about it." On drums was Michael Clarke, who had never before held a set of drumsticks in his hands but who bore a resemblance to Rolling Stone Brian Jones, which was deemed to be of more significance than actual musical ability. As Crosby co-author Carl Gottlieb recalled, "Clarke had played beatnik bongos and conga drum, but had no experience with conventional drumming."

Richie Unterberger noted in *Turn! Turn! Turn!* that the guys in the Byrds "had barely known each other before getting thrown into the studio, were still learning electric instruments, and in a couple cases had never really even played their assigned instruments at all. Actually, Michael Clarke didn't even have an instrument to start with; on his first rehearsals, and even some recording sessions, he kept time on cardboard boxes."

Gene Clark, though by far the most gifted songwriter in the band and a talented vocalist as well, could barely play his guitar and so was relegated to banging the tambourine, which was Jim Morrison's (and various non-musically inclined members of the Partridge Family's) instrument of choice as well. David Crosby, tasked with rhythm guitar duties, wasn't much better. Crosby himself admitted, in his first autobiography (does anyone really need to write more than one autobiography, by the way?), that, "Roger was the only one who could really play."

The band had another problem. With the clear exception of Gene Clark, the group was a bit lacking in songwriting ability. To compensate, they initially played mostly covers. Fully a third of the band's first album consisted of covers of Dylan songs, and nearly another third was made up of covers of songs by other folk singer/songwriters. Clark contributed the five original songs, two of them co-written with McGuinn. As for Crosby, who emerged as the band's biggest star, his only contribution to the Byrds' first album was backing vocals.

Carl Franzoni perhaps summed it up best when he declared rather bluntly that, "the Byrds' records were manufactured." The first album in particular was an entirely engineered affair created by taking a col-

lection of songs by outside songwriters and having them performed by a group of nameless studio musicians (for the record, the actual musicians were Glen Campbell on guitar, Hal Blaine on drums, Larry Knechtel on bass, Leon Russell on electric piano, and Jerry Cole on rhythm guitar), after which the band's trademark vocal harmonies, entirely a studio creation, were added to the mix.

As would be expected, the Byrds' live performances, according to Barney Hoskyns' *Waiting for the Sun*, "weren't terribly good." But that didn't matter much; the band got a lot of assistance from the media, with *Time* being among the first to champion the new band. And they also got a tremendous assist from Vito and the Freaks and from the Young Turks, as previously discussed.

We shall return to the Byrds, and to the ubiquitous Vito Paulekas, in the next chapter. For now, I leave you with this curious little story about Byrd Chris Hillman's initial arrival in Laurel Canyon, as told by Michael Walker in *Laurel Canyon*: "In the autumn of 1964, a nineteen-year-old bluegrass adept and virtuoso mandolin player named Chris Hillman stood at the corner of Laurel Canyon Boulevard and Kirkwood Drive contemplating a FOR RENT sign on a telephone pole across from the Canyon Country Store... It didn't take him long to find [a place to stay], and, in the canyon's emerging mythos of enchanted serendipity, one presented itself as if by magic. 'This guy drives up and he says you looking for a place to rent?' Hillman recalls. 'I said yeah, and he said, Well, follow me up. It was this young guy who was a dentist. It was his parents' house, a beautiful old wood house down a dirt road—and he lived on the top, and he was renting out the bottom part. I just went, Wow, perfect. The guy ended up being my dentist for a while... It was the top of the world, a beautiful, beautiful place. I had the best place in the canyon.'"

In the Los Angeles of the 1960s, you see, it was quite common for a very wealthy person to offer exquisite living accommodations to a random, scruffy vagrant. We know this to be true because it happened to Charles Manson on more than one occasion. In any event, Chris Hillman's former mountaintop home no longer exists because, as tends to happen in Laurel Canyon, it burned to the ground on what Walker described as a "hot, witchy day in the sixties." According to Hillman, "Crosby was at my house an hour before the blaze. I can't connect it yet—where the Satan factor came into play with David—but I'm working on it."